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THE PROTECTION OF OUR NATIVE FLORA.

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THE Society for the Protection of Native Plants has already surpassed the hopes of its founders in the breadth of its influence and the extent of interest and sympathy, which it has aroused. Its work has a national scope and already the Society enrolls members in fifteen states and in Canada. Many thousands of its brief leaflets, well written, moderate in their tone, and convincing in their appeal have been distributed. They have gone to libraries, teachers, members of botanical and horticultural societies, village improvement associations, park-commissioners, flower missions, and especially to school children. It is impossible to doubt that these circulars have brought new ideas to many hundred flower pickers, who thus cautioned will be more than willing to abate any excesses which they may have been thoughtlessly committing in the destruction of our attractive native plants. Newspapers have given their editorial approval to the work of this society and it is most encouraging to see that, stimulated doubtless by this example, other associations have been formed to further the same good cause. Thus there is reason to congratulate the Society for the Protection of Native Plants upon an excellent work well begun. The desire now is that the activity may be unremitted and that it may be continuously directed along wise and practical lines. While pure sentiment and aesthetic instincts may well be appealed to in this work, it is obvious that the movement will be harmed rather than aided by effusions which are merely sentimental and not founded upon carefully ascertained facts.

The greatest need of the Society for the Protection of Native Plants is at present accurate information from many sources regarding

the actual nature and extent of the depredations, which it is its object to prevent. That much needless destruction of our more attractive plants is constantly going on, cannot be doubted. That much of this irreparable loss can be obviated, few will wish to deny. Nevertheless, modes of practical procedure are as yet difficult to determine owing to the vagueness of the information obtainable regarding the particular places and plants requiring attention.

Of plants, which are reported as having been exterminated in certain localities, the majority prove on investigation to be those which were once known in the vicinity of large and growing cities. In regard to most of these cases it is evident to the thoughtful that the destruction of the native vegetation is due only in a minor degree to flower pickers. It is far more the result of perfected drainage, the paving of streets, the extension of squalid suburbs, the tramp of many feet, the demoralizing influences of dust and coal smoke, the dumping of rubbish, and finally the introduction of foreign weeds. It is evident, therefore, that effective protection of the wild flowers in such situations is quite beyond the power and hopes of this Society. Regarding any attractive bits of native vegetation still lingering in the immediate vicinity of our cities, it can only commend them to the legal protection of park-commissioners, urging upon these officials the superior beauty of the wild and natural in comparison with any studied arrangement of exotic shrubs.

But well out from the shadow of the brick and mortar of our great cities the native plants are also being destroyed and in ways so needless that much may certainly be done for their protection. It is far out in the country that the beautiful patches of mountain laurel and holly are being literally hacked to pieces to furnish the quickly passing decorations of winter balls, city weddings and church festivities. It is about our remote summer resorts in the White Mountains, Adirondacks, northern Michigan, and Wisconsin, that the stately paper birches are thoughtlessly stripped of the bark and thus permanently disfigured. It is on Cape Cod that Italian flower gatherers are said to rake together huge bales of trailing arbutus (roots and all), which, brought to the city, yield the innumerable little bunches of flowers purchased on the streets by persons who never suspect the ruthless destruction wrought by this trade. It is on the southern shores of Cape Ann that the botanically interesting station of the *Magnolia glauca* — the only locality for this plant in New England

— has been well nigh destroyed by the transplanting of the trees to the lawns of country residences — a practice the more deplorable since rarely accomplished with success. It may be well to state in this connection that persons desirous of cultivating our native shrubs and vines will succeed much better if they obtain thrifty and well selected stock from some reliable nurseryman than if they attempt to transplant specimens secured in the woods. There are several well-known reasons for this; one is, that the nursery stock has in general been raised in soil and environment nearly approaching that in which the plant is likely to be placed, while on the other hand it is usually difficult to reproduce the exact conditions in which the wild plant has grown. Furthermore, the skilful nurseryman has often selected those forms of our native plants, which experience has shown to develop rapidly and prove hardy. For instance, the writer has observed several Virginia creepers obtained from a nursery and set out along with apparently healthy plants of the same species from the woods. In every instance the nursery stock has in its growth and luxuriance far outstripped the wild plants, the latter remaining relatively low, stunted, sprawling individuals, apparently unable to accommodate themselves to the altered environment. In a similar way wild azaleas and rhododendrons are often dug up and transplanted to gardens and lawns, but rarely with success.

It is evident therefore that the destruction of our native vegetation is of two kinds; in one case it is a deplorable but inevitable result of the increase of population and the extension of our cities, in the other case the injury and depredations are of a nature to be combated vigorously and with a lively hope of success; for they are the result of no grinding and irresistible economic laws nor even of obstinate selfishness but merely of ignorance. The chief aim of the Society is therefore to enlighten. It is in its province for instance to post notices about summer resorts cautioning visitors against the stripping of the birch trees and pointing out the irreparable injury to the tree — a matter seldom realized by the city guest. It is the duty of the Society to inform the public through the newspapers or by its leaflets concerning the extent and seriousness of the destruction, which is yearly wrought to supply street venders with their wild flowers. This like other undesirable trades can be most successfully discouraged by effecting through enlightened sentiment a diminution in the demand rather than by restraints in the matter of supply.

The province of the Society thus being one of instruction its success will depend upon the amount of accurate and pertinent information, which it can accumulate for distribution to the public. It is urged therefore that persons who are in a position to witness needless depredations upon our native plants will kindly communicate the details of such cases to the secretary¹ of the Society. The executive board of the Society is especially desirous of securing accurate data regarding the sources of supply to venders of wild flowers on streets and at railway stations, also the present sources of the mountain laurel, holly, and other Christmas greens, which are brought to our cities in astonishing quantities during the winter season. Information will always be welcomed regarding plants to be especially protected, nature of leaflets which should be issued, places where notices should be posted, and names of persons desiring membership in the Society or willing to sustain or participate in its work.

NOTES ON NORTH AMERICAN GRASSES.

ELMER D. MERRILL.

- ORYZOPSIS CANADENSIS (Poir.) Torr. Fl. N. Y. 2: 433. 1843.
Stipa canadensis Poir. in Lam. Encycl. 7: 452. 1806; Pursh, Fl. Am. Sept. 1: 72. 1814.
Stipa juncea Michx. Fl. Bor.-Am. 1: 54. 1803, non Linn. 1753.
Milium, (sine nomine) Muhl. Gram. 78. 1817.
Milium (?) *muhlenbergianum* Schultes, Mant. 2: 178. 1824.
Milium pungens Torr. in Spreng. Neue Entd. 2: 102. 1821; & Fl. U. S. 1: 78. 1824.
Oryzopsis parviflora. Nutt. Journ. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila. 3: 125. 1823.
Oryzopsis juncea B. S. P. Prel. Cat. N. Y. 67. 1888.
Panicum firmum Kunth, Rev. Gram. 1: 37. 1829-35.
Urachne canadensis Torr. & Gray in Trin. & Rupr. Agrost. 3: 17. 1842.
Urachne brevicaudata Trin. Mem. Acad. St. Petersb. VI,² 3: 127. 1835.

According to the Rochester rules, *Oryzopsis canadensis* (Poir.) Torr., is the correct name for this species, as it is the earliest available one, Michaux's name, *Stipa juncea*, being invalidated by *Stipa*

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